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world of pure thought? We have been content with second-hand theology because we were too busy with material things, and because others were ready to furnish us with ideas. The theological pawnshops which we have pat-

ronized are permanently closed. Are we not ready, forgetting our timidity, abandoning the covert of our traditionalism, to use the undoubted powers with which we are endowed in searching after the deep things of God?

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## WILL THE RETURNING SOLDIER WANT THE CHURCH?

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*The more we discuss the returning soldier the more we discover that we are really dealing with no mere abstraction. It is easy to generalize, but hard to face concrete realities. There is therefore all the more need of the testimony of those who have been in actual touch with the soldiers. In the strict sense of the words "the returning soldier" does not exist. What we have is returning soldiers, hundreds of thousands of them. Just what they will be and just what they will do remains to be seen, but in the meantime churches ought to remember that it is easier for middle-aged folks to be content than it is for young people.*

Will the returning soldier want the church? The answer to the question rests with the church itself. He will be more open to religious influences, that is sure. There are thousands who went into the war with motives that they would not have described as religious but which can hardly be called otherwise. The conflict had the sacredness of a great crusade. They were ready to die for what are, in the last analysis, religious things—the triumph of right over wrong, the securing of justice for others, the establishment of permanent peace, the making of a better world. Perhaps, as Donald Hankey said, "they never connected the goodness in which they believed with the God in Whom the

chaplains said they ought to believe." Nevertheless, in the strain of war the fundamental realities of religion came to have a more vital meaning for them. Men who had never thought much about God came to feel that underneath were the Everlasting Arms. Men who had never prayed much in a definite way found their thoughts reaching out to God and felt that they had been helped thereby. Men who would hardly have called themselves Christians came to feel that there was some connection between Christ and the cause in which they were engaged.

There was also at the front religion of a far more articulate kind than this. The three outstanding soldiers in the

allied armies were men to whom faith in God and in the triumph of His cause was one of their greatest resources in the war: General Foch, who had mass said regularly for himself and his army; Sir Douglas Haig, who attended religious services almost every Sunday during the war; and General Pershing, who so appreciated the importance of religion in the army that he cabled to the War Department, urging the sending of far more chaplains. The young soldier of France whom Maurice Barrés describes gave expression to the faith of thousands when he wrote to his family: "Today we leave for the trenches. Tonight I shall be watching over you. You know who will be watching over me."

Just as long as men are religious, just so long will they want some kind of a church. The spirit of doing things together is absolutely essential both to Christian worship and to Christian work. No one will realize more quickly than the soldier how true this is. He knows the danger of isolation. He knows also the inspiration that comes from a feeling of comradeship in a common task. He appreciates to the full Edward Rowland Sill's remark: "For my part I long to 'fall in' with somebody. This picket duty is monotonous. I hanker after a shoulder on this side and the other." It is this human impulse to "fall in" that gives rise to any organization. It is the need to "fall in," in order to do any effective Christian work, that makes the church a necessity. You might as well expect a zealous soldier to take his gun and march off single-handed against the national foe as expect a Christian to carry on his work apart and alone. Better than anyone else does the soldier

realize that it must be literally true that "like a mighty army moves the Church of God." He knows that if Christians do not "move like an army," united in the achievement of a corporate task, they will never succeed in moving very far.

The question, then, is hardly whether the returning soldier will want the church. It is, rather, What kind of a church will he want? And the question may really be answered in a word by saying that he will want just the same church that any other man wants. The soldiers are not a special class or kind of men. But those who have been face to face during the war with the grim realities of life and death will see certain things about the church in clearer light. There will be lessons that we shall need to learn from them if in the days of reconstruction that lie ahead the church is to lay hold of the loyalty of these men.

In the first place, the returning soldier will want *a church in which the one great controlling ideal is that of unselfish service*. This is the spirit that the war demanded of him and that the war developed in an unparalleled degree. The crisis of the past months revealed in men latent capacities for unselfishness and sacrifice that we had never realized they possessed. Never before had we seen such consecration to a worthy cause, such devotion to unselfish ends, on the part of a whole nation. There never was a time when so many men found their great objective in life in ministering to the growing good of the world rather than in acquiring selfish gain. This was true not only of soldiers but of the rank and file of men and women all over the land, for when others were dying for

us at the front a man at home was ashamed to lead a selfish life. Out of this new experience of vicarious living came a fuller realization of the central meaning of Christianity as a life of service even to the point of sacrifice. No wonder that before the Battle of the Somme, as Chaplain Tiplady tells us, the favorite song among the British soldiers was Isaac Watts's old hymn:

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died.

Now that the war is over are we going to drift back to our old easy-going selfishness, our individualism, our unconcern for others? Whatever be true of the rest of the world, the returning soldier will expect something else of the church of Christ. He will expect it so to have caught the spirit of Christlike service, the meaning of which he has himself come to see more fully out of his experience in the war, that this will be the one dominant principle of its life. He will want to find in the church the great home of all those who have come to share the ideal of unselfish living.

In the second place, the returning soldier will want *a united church*. In the furnace of war men realized the unity of their faith, not their divergencies. The things that they shared in common meant everything to them. The matters on which they differed seemed then very trivial and unimportant. An effective symbol of the interdenominational character of religion in the army was seen in the union communion services that were held in our great cantonments and sometimes participated in by more than a thousand men of at least a score of different branches of the church. Men in the

midst of war did not have much use for denominational fences, and they will not have much use for them when they come back. Least of all will they be concerned with churches that spend half their time in controversy and petty rivalry with each other when they ought to be joined hand in hand in a common task.

In the early days of the war the Kaiser was reported to have said to his brother-in-law Constantine, "We shall beat them, because they have no united command." Soldiers who have seen success come to the allied armies after they had effected the united front are not going to be satisfied with churches that continue to carry on their work in the old disjointed and unco-ordinated way. No doubt they will still speak of themselves as Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and other groups, but they will surely realize more keenly that, although they bear many given names, they all have the same family name, because one is their Master, even Christ, and all they are brothers. They may not expect all Christians to unite in a common creed, but they will expect them to unite in a common purpose and to do whatever may be necessary in a practical way to make that purpose most effective.

In the third place, the returning soldier will want *a church with a vision of its task as a great and heroic one*. We have learned in the war that it is the heroic that appeals to men. We have come to see that if the challenge be great enough men will respond with everything that they have and are. Perhaps we have also learned that one of the reasons why the church has not

called forth a more enthusiastic response is because it has not seemed to present a great enough program as its task. Men have too often thought of it as centering its efforts simply on getting select souls into heaven. Or else its work may even have appeared to consist mainly in having splendid edifices, large congregations, eloquent sermons, good music, and fervent prayers. To many, no doubt, the church seemed more like a religious club than a Christian army engaged in a tremendous undertaking. They failed to see in it anything that demanded heroic effort or that would make sacrifice for its sake appear as a joy.

Among the hundreds of returned soldiers now in the Recuperation Hospital where I am stationed there is a young fellow, in the prime of life, who has had the lower part of his face blown away by an explosive bullet that struck him in the mouth. From exposure in the trenches he has also contracted serious disease of the lungs. Through a miracle of oral surgery a pair of jaws has been made for him, but even so he is hardly more than a wreck of his former self. The other day I said to him, "You got battered up pretty badly, didn't you?" "I guess I did, chaplain," he replied, "but it would have been lots worse than this not to have had the chance to do my bit over there." Such is the sacrificial spirit in which men will respond to a cause that seems great enough. The war made that kind of an appeal to the heroic. Jesus also made it: "Whosoever would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." But has not the church too often tried to enlist men by appealing to an impulse for ease

and safety rather than for the difficult and sublime? Has it not too often seemed to say, "Whoever would have a pleasant, comfortable time, whoever has an eye to his own advantage, let him come into the church." Surely the war has taught us to make a more daring appeal, and one more in keeping with the spirit of Jesus. Let us rather say, "Whoever would have a share in the greatest work in the world, even to the point of sacrifice, whoever wants a cause that is worth his all, let him come into the church."

A church with such an appeal ought to be able to gather to itself and permanently to sustain all the spirit of heroic endeavor that the war showed men to possess and succeeded in developing throughout the land. It would then afford in the finest way what William James called the "moral equivalent of war." "What we now need to discover in the social realm," he wrote in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, "is the moral equivalent of war: something heroic that will speak to men as universally as war does, and yet will be as compatible with their spiritual selves as war has proved itself to be incompatible." These days following the war are the time of all times when we ought to present the task of the church in so large a way that there will be in it "something heroic that will speak to men as universally as war does," something that will appeal to their awakened desire for magnificent effort and call them to maintain these new standards of unselfish endeavor.

But the church will never be able to do this unless it conceives its mission in as heroic terms as its Master con-

ceived his, as nothing less than the establishment of God's Kingdom of righteousness and good-will in the world. It must definitely set for itself no smaller task than making the spirit of Christlike love and service prevail in every aspect of human life. It will refuse to be satisfied until family life, politics, business, industry, international affairs are all controlled by this ideal. It will never be unconcerned with the liquor traffic, commercialized vice, sweatshops, child labor, bad tenements, industrial injustice, political corruption, class selfishness, race prejudice, the menace of future wars, nor with anything else that stands in the way of Christ's ideal of a human brotherhood resting on a basis of the divine Fatherhood. Let the church be a clear witness to possibilities that lie beyond the present facts, and offer to men the opportunity of helping to usher in the better age that is to come. This was the kind of an appeal that stirred men at the front. It is the kind of appeal that will seem worth while to them after their return.

Further, the church that is to have a great enough program to appeal to the heroic in men must not only conceive its task in no less an intensive way but also in no less an extensive way than we conceived our task in the war. The war has made us all think in international terms as never before. It has made us patriots not only of America but of the world, and this new emphasis on the international spirit, when applied to the church, brings us to the heart of the foreign missionary enterprise. It means that we are concerned in molding not simply our own nation but the world according to the ideal of Jesus. In these days when the

phrase "a league of nations" is on everybody's lips, can the church be satisfied to think of its task in any provincial, near-sighted way? Is the vision of the church to be circumscribed in a time when the vision of all thoughtful men is leaping across the confines of country and of race? Certainly such a church would fail to present a challenge magnificent enough to evoke a great response from men who have come to see the significance of the world-war in which they have been engaged.

Enlistment in the Christian church, if its task is thus conceived, could be presented as a great permanent enlistment for continuing in a more comprehensive way the same high cause to a particular phase of which we devoted ourselves in the war. We must make men see that the world is not going to be transformed simply because the Allies have won a victory, but that it can be transformed if men will "carry on" in the same spirit of heroic service and unselfishness. It is not enough that one kaiser be dethroned; the kaiser-spirit of self-aggrandizement at the expense of others must be dethroned everywhere. We shall still need to give ourselves unceasingly in support of the moral and spiritual issues that were involved in the war. We shall still need to be united in the common task of securing the full triumph of right over wrong, love over hate, the spirit of service over the spirit of selfishness, the ideal of Christ over every un-Christlike thing in human life. It is now our part "to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought have thus far so nobly advanced." It is our superb opportunity to make the returning soldiers feel that the church

is the true rallying-ground of all who are "dedicated to the great task remaining before us," in order that their comrades who have fallen in Europe "shall not have died in vain." Let the church take to itself in the fullest way the stirring challenge that Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrea made to his fellow-soldiers just before he gave the last full measure of devotion on the field of Flanders:

Take up our quarrel with the foe!  
To you, from falling hands, we throw  
The torch. Be yours to lift it high!  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies blow  
In Flanders fields.

A church that is content with standards of comfortable respectability will break faith with those who died. It will have so feeble an appeal that the rank and file of returning soldiers will have no part or lot in it. But if the church will catch up the torch and carry it farther and farther on in the same spirit in which our finest men engaged in the war, it will surely be a church that the returning soldier will want. The best soldiers of our country would then be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and like a mighty army would move the church of God.

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## THE BIGGEST THING IN CHRISTIANITY

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Jesus was once daring enough to say to a group of his contemporaries, "Ye are the salt of the earth: ye are the light of the world." They were people who had joined with him in trying to live the new kind of life which he taught. This made them, in his judgment, very different from others. In becoming his genuine disciples, that is, in trying to be from day to day the sort of people he urged them to be and said they could be if they would, they had become a most distinctive and important element of human society. They had become as vital to the life of the human world as "salt" and "light" are in the physical world.

The creation of this new kind of people was the foundation of Jesus' whole

work. Everything else that he accomplished, or hoped to accomplish, for human life depended upon that. The same thing is true today. The first and most vital work of Christianity is the making of Christians. Everything else in the whole Christian program follows that and depends upon it.

Plainly, therefore, there is no question more important to the Christian church than the question, What is it that makes people Christian? What are the chief essentials of personal Christianity?

One would suppose that this inquiry must have been answered long ago. It was answered clearly and fully by Jesus himself; but that that answer is clearly understood and fully followed by